IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A spark plug for an internal combustion engine comprising:

a center electrode including a basic body and a first tip joined to said basic body; and

a ground electrode including a base having an interlayer formed at a predetermined position of said base, and a second tip joined to a surface of said interlayer,

wherein said first tip and said second tip are disposed to face each other, said first tip and said second tip are each made of Ir or made of an Ir alloy,

wherein a thermal expansion coefficient of said interlayer is between a thermal expansion coefficient of said base and a thermal expansion coefficient of said second tip, and the basic body and the first tip are joined by a laser weld.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The spark plug for an internal combustion engine according to claim 1, wherein said first tip and said second tip are each made of an Ir alloy that contains (1) Rh of 1.5 to 50 weight %, (2) Pt of 1 to 10 weight %, (3) Rh of 1.5 to 50 weight % and Pt of 1 to 10 weight % or (4) Rh 1.5 to 50 weight % and Ru of 1 to 10 weight % ~~Rh of 1.5 to 50 weight % and Pt of 1 to 10 weight %, or Rh of 1.5 to 50 weight % and Ru of 1 to 10 weight %~~, and said interlayer is made of an Ir or Pt alloy.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The spark plug of an internal combustion engine according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein a thermal expansion coefficient at 900°C of said interlayer is $10X10^{-6}/°C$ to $16X10^{-6}/°C$.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The spark plug for an internal combustion engine according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein the whole surface of said interlayer is covered with said second tip.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The spark plug for an internal combustion engine according to claim 1, wherein a good thermal conduction core is disposed in an interior of said base of said ground electrode.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The spark plug for an internal combustion engine according to claim 2, wherein a thermal conduction core is disposed in an interior of said base of said ground electrode.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The spark plug for an internal combustion engine according to claim 3, wherein a thermal conduction core is disposed in an interior of said base of said ground electrode.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The spark plug for an internal combustion engine according to claim 4, wherein a thermal conduction core is disposed in an interior of said base of said ground electrode.

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The spark plug for an internal combustion engine according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein said interlayer and said second tip are joined to each other by electric resistance welding.